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ABSTRACT

The book takes its title from the first of nine Northern Cheyenne folk tales, illustrated by Indian children in grades 2-8. The stories are: "The Turtle Went to War" about a turtle who makes war on the Indians and takes two scalps; "The Cat", explaining why cats eat first and wash later; "The Frog and the Watersnake", telling how a sly old frog saves her children from a snake; "The Stolen Girl", about how the daughter of a chief is lured away by a rat disguised as a handsome young man; "The Bat", explaining the origin of the confusion about whether a bat is a beast or a bird; "The Bear and the Turtle", telling how a turtle outsmarts a bear; "The Skunk and the Jack Rabbit", explaining why rabbits have little fat and skunks have a lot; "The Hunters", telling how five hunters with various disabilities make a catch; and "The Iron Monster", describing the first and only Cheyenne attack on a train. The stories are rated as being easy to read and have an "easy" interest level. A list of key words necessary to understand each story is included. The book is part of the Indian Culture Series of the Montana Council for Indian Education. (SB)

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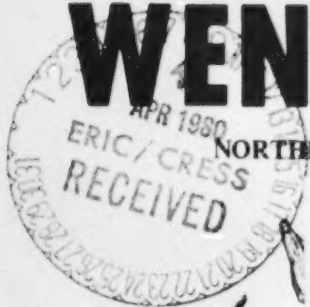
MONTANA

THE TURTLE WENT TO WAR

TALL BULL - WEIST

RC 011970

THE TURTLE WENT TO WAR



NORTHERN CHEYENNE FOLK TALES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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6th Grade*

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and
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Stories of the Northern Cheyenne
BB - 12
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THE TURTLE WENT TO WAR

NORTHERN CHEYENNE FOLK TALES

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THE TURTLE WENT TO WAR

There was once a large camp of water turtles. One day the chief of the turtles sent the pipe around to all the friendly tribes--the grasshoppers, frogs, snakes, butterflies and rabbits. They all smoked the pipe and sent their young men to the turtle's camp.

Then the turtle chief spoke to them. "There are many Indians camped nearby. Let's go on the warpath against them and kill their chief," he said.

They all said they would go on the warpath. The warriors walked around the inside



by Clement Wilson



of the camp circle and went out the opening to the east. Then they walked around the outside of the camp and started off, carrying their war bonnets and war clothes. They walked all night and reached the Indian camp just before the sun came up.

Each of the warriors went into a lodge. The turtle chief went into the chief's home. He took the chief by the throat and choked him until he was dead. Then he bit off his scalp. When the sun rose, the turtle slipped under the dead chief's bed.



Later that morning the Indian chief was found dead. A crier went through the camp, telling the people to watch out for enemies. All of the young men left the camp and went hunting for enemies.

Soon the dead chief's wife began taking down the lodge so his body could be moved to another place. Someone moved the bed and saw a spot of fresh earth under it. He pushed a stick into the earth and felt the turtle, who had dug into the ground to hide himself. Now the Indians knew that the turtle was the one who had killed their chief.

Another man was chosen as chief, then the people asked him what they should do with the turtle.

"Let's find out what will kill him" he said. "He's the one who killed our chief."

Someone said, "Put him in the fire!"

"No," said another, "we can't burn him. His shell is too hard."

"Let's hang him!" said someone else.

"No, let's cut off his head!" said another.

"No," said a fourth man. "Let's drown him!"

Everyone said that that was the best way. So the next afternoon they took the



turtle down to a pond. A crowd of people followed for they wanted to see the turtle killed.

A man was chosen to drown the turtle. He was painted with war paint. He waded out to the center of the pond, carrying the turtle. The turtle shook and acted like he was very frightened.

Just as the man started to put him into the water, the turtle turned his head and bit him. This made the man jump and he fell down in the water. The turtle drowned him, then bit off his scalp. When the man didn't come back up to the top of the water, the people began saying, "What shall we do?" but they were afraid to go into the water.

The turtle stayed in the pond until night came. Then he went back to the place where the chief's lodge had stood and hunted until he found the other scalp he had taken.

All of his friends had gone back to camp for they thought he had been killed. The turtle was glad that he had taken the two scalps by himself. He started home.

THE CAT

Long ago a cat went looking in a woods for food. He soon caught a mouse. "Now I will have a good supper," thought the cat.

He put down the mouse and began washing himself before eating. While he was busy washing his face, the mouse got up and ran away. But the cat was busy washing. He did not notice the mouse had run off until he was ready to eat. He looked everywhere. The mouse was gone.

The cat never forgot how the mouse had left while he was busy washing himself. That is why, even today, a cat always eats first and washes himself later.





Mamie Little Coyote.
Second grade

THE FROGS AND THE WATERSNAKE

There was once an old frog who lived near a stream with her children. One day a watersnake swam into their hole.

The old frog became very frightened when she saw the snake. But she said to her children, "Here is my brother who has come to visit us!"

Then she told the snake, "Brother, here are all your nieces and nephews. They are all named after you."

All this time the snake was waiting for a chance to catch one of her children.

"I'm very glad to see them," said the watersnake.

Then the old frog told her children, "Go and get some wood and I'll cook for your uncle. But she whispered to them, "Run away! We are in danger!"

The little frogs ran from the hole and jumped into the stream and were safe.

When the children did not come back, the old frog said, "I will go out and help bring in the wood."

Then she left and jumped into the stream.

All the frogs swam away and were saved.

THE STOLEN GIRL

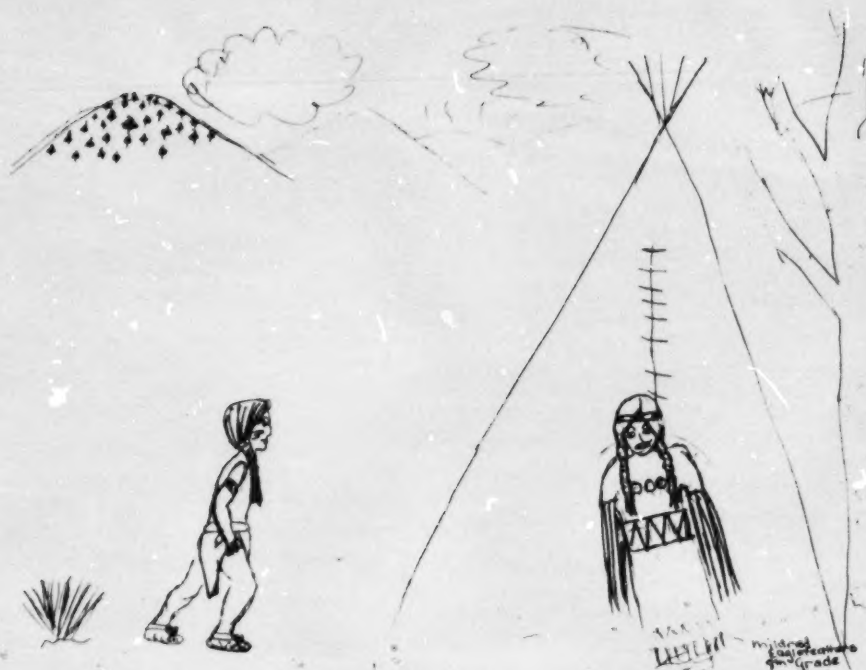
There was once a young girl who was the daughter of a chief. Many young men came to see her, but she did not care for any of them. She wanted a boy she could love.

One evening she was sitting in the lodge. Suddenly she began to smell a very nice smell in the air. She wondered where it was coming from. She did not want to show herself at the door of the lodge. So she took her mother's awl and made a hole in the lodge skins.

When she looked through the hole, she saw a strange young man standing outside. She watched him for a while and felt she liked him. She would go out and find out who he was.

So she went outside and, as she walked past him, he spoke to her. She stopped and they began to talk. After a time she asked him who he was and why he had come to the camp.

"My people live not far from here," he said. "I have come to get you. Come and we will go to my father's lodge."



The girl thought for a moment, then she told him she would go with him. "Other men want me," she said, "but I will go only with you."

Then she went to the lodge and got her awl and sinew and her quills. She put them together and went back out.

"Now I am ready," she said. "Where do you live?"

"I live toward the rising sun," said the young man. "There are many camps of my people there."

Then they started on their way.

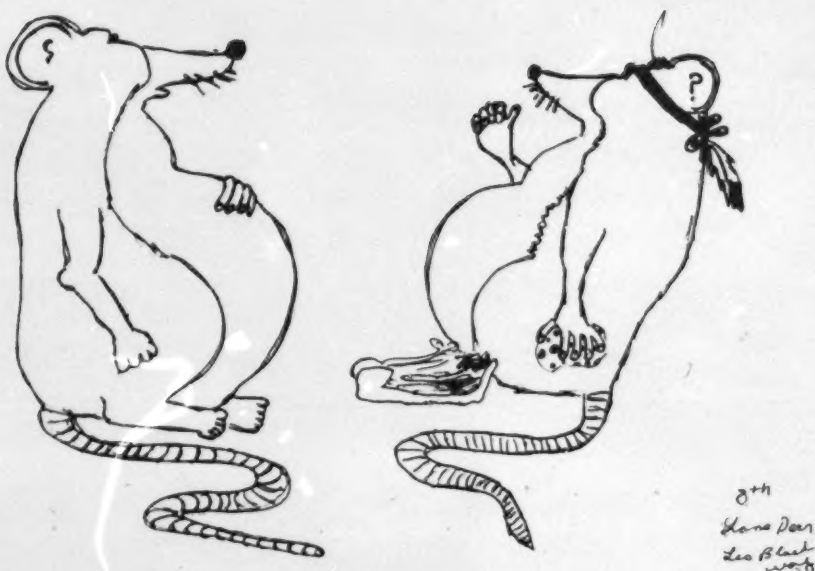
After a time, the girl asked the young man, "What is your name?"

"My name is Red Eye," he said.

They traveled a long way. It was almost dark when they reached the boy's camp. Around the camp there were many trees. The boy took the girl to a big lodge that stood in the center of the camp.

When they reached the door, they stopped. A number of men were inside and they could hear them talking and laughing and see their shadows as they sat around the fire.





Inside, the young man's father was telling the others, "My son has gone far away. He has gone to bring home the daughter of a chief. If he has good luck, he will bring her back with him."

At last Red Eye told the girl, "Let us go in." Then he led her into the lodge. The lodge had beautiful linings and on the beds there were many nice warm buffalo robes. She went over and sat on the women's side.



Then, as Red Eye was speaking to his father, she suddenly saw that he had a very sharp nose. She looked at the other men and saw that they also had sharp noses.

Back in the girl's camp, her father and mother were sad because their daughter was gone. All the young men were out looking for her. When they came back without finding her, the chief told them, "The one who finds my daughter shall marry her!"

The next morning, when the girl awoke, she was in a big hollow tree. Mountain rats sat all around her. The buffalo robes



on which they had been sleeping were grass nests.

A young Cheyenne man was out looking for the girl. Just as he passed the tree, she came out.

"Where have you been?" he cried.

"Everyone in camp is sad because you were gone. We have been looking everywhere for you."

"Friend," said the girl, "the rats took me away and brought me here."

Then the young man took the girl back to camp. Everyone was very happy when they saw that she had come home. Not long after that, the young man married her.

And that was how rats first began to steal things from people.





THE BAT

Once a bat was sleeping, hanging upside down. Soon a cat came along and caught him.

The bat began to beg for his life. "I am an animal just like you," he told the cat. "Look at my fur. See my teeth and ears. They are just like yours. Let me go and I will always be your friend!"

So the cat let him go and he flew off. Before long he began to fly after the insects that were flying about.

Suddenly a hawk swooped down and caught him. The hawk was going to eat him.

Then the bat began to beg for his life once more. "I am just like you, friend," he told the hawk. "I am a bird. See my wings. I fly just like you. Let me go and I will be your friend!"

At last the hawk let him go.

And to this day the animals wonder whether the bat is an animal or a bird.

THE BEAR AND THE TURTLE

One day a bear came upon a turtle who was sleeping in the sun at the edge of a deep pond. The bear was very hungry. So she went to the turtle and stood over him so her legs were on either side. Now the turtle could not get away.

Then the bear began to wonder if she could eat him. She reached over and tapped his shell. "I should not eat him," she thought. "He is too hard." Still she stood and watched him.



gtr Sara De Crane



Mary Wall
8th Pryor

Now the turtle was wide awake. But he acted as though he were still asleep. He was thinking as hard as he could how he might get away.

Before long the bear took a small weed and started to push it up the turtle's nose to make him sneeze.

Just then the turtle had a thought. He began to act as if he had just begun to wake up. "Oh," said the turtle. "I heard some bad news. No Wahe is being called some bad names. I was very sad when I heard this. I must have cried myself to sleep."

No Wahe was the bear's name. When she heard what the turtle said, tears began running down her cheeks. She felt very bad. She put her paws to her eyes while she cried.

The turtle knew that this was his chance to get away. Quickly he flipped over into the pool and was gone.

The bear knew she had been tricked so she gave a jump into the pool and began to hunt for him. She hunted and hunted but she never did find the turtle. He was safe at the bottom of the deepest part of the pond.

Barbara
Bu 11
7th
grade



THE SKUNK AND THE JACK RABBIT

One time a skunk and a jack rabbit were walking along together when they both became sick. So they decided to doctor each other.

The jack rabbit told the skunk, "Let me doctor you first. I will suck all the bad blood out of you." Then the jack rabbit began sucking the bad blood from the skunk.

Soon the skunk was weak from so much lost blood. "Stop!" he cried. "You are sucking out all my blood!"

Then it was the skunk's turn to doctor the jack rabbit. He began sucking the bad fat from the rabbit. He sucked and sucked.

Suddenly the jack rabbit cried, "Stop!" "You are taking all my fat from me!" He was very weak from so much lost fat.

But before long they both felt much better. Then they went on their way.

Ever since then jack rabbits have had a lot of blood but very little fat. And skunks are always fat but have very little blood.

THE HUNTERS

There were once five hunters who made camp together. One was deaf, another was blind, and the third man had no arms and the fourth had no legs. The fifth man had no clothes at all.

One day their food ran low so they went out to hunt. After a time they took a rest.

Then the deaf hunter said, "I hear a prairie chicken!"

"There it is in that bush!" said the blind man.

And so they had the man without arms shoot it and knock it down out of the bush.

"Go and get it," they told the man without legs.

After he brought it back, they gave it to the hunter without clothes. "Here," they said. "Put it in your pocket!"

THE IRON MONSTER

This is a true story.

Long ago a Cheyenne war party was coming north after a series of raids. After a time they came to an iron road and stopped. They had heard that the iron road was being built through their hunting grounds and wondered about it.

Suddenly they saw far away an iron monster coming towards them! They saw it throw black smoke and sparks as it came! They did not know what to think.

At once they began to attack the iron monster. They broke into two groups, one on each side of the track. Then, as the monster came closer and closer, they charged!

The iron monster began to move very fast. Then it made a loud whistling noise. The war party rode toward it head on, riding as fast as they could!

Then, just as they were about to meet the iron monster, horses and riders turned and flew off in all directions!

That was the first and only time the Cheyennes tried to attack a train!

KEY WORDS

Recognition of these words is needed for understanding the stories in this book.

The Turtle Went to War:

warriors	lodge	scalp
enemies	drown	choked

The Cat:

mouse

The Frogs and the Watersnake:

watersnake	frightened	nieces
nephews	swam	

The Stolen Girl:

sharp	marry	hollow
rats		

The Bat:

bat	beg
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The Bear and the Turtle:

tapped	weed	sneeze
cried	paws	safe

The Skunk and the Jack Rabbit:

skunk	suck	jack rabbit
blood	weak	

The Hunters:

hunter	deaf	blind
prairie	pocket	

The Iron Monster:

iron monster	wondered	attack
charged	rode	

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